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Sen. Chance to carry Governor's ID theft legislation creating a GBI task force

ATLANTA – State Sen. Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone) has introduced Governor Sonny Perdue's legislation to establish an identity theft task force within the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). Earlier this year, Gov. Perdue included \$1 million in his budget proposal to fund the task force, which will combat identity theft on several fronts, including investigating alleged identity theft, educating the public, supporting victims and training local law enforcement in combating identity theft.

"Identity theft cost Georgia citizens more than \$25 million in 2006," Sen. Chance said. "More than 34,000 reports of identity theft in Georgia were filed with the Federal Trade Commission from 2002 to 2006, and Georgia is ranked seventh in the nation when it comes to identity theft per capita.

"The GBI has a proven track record of combating crimes that plague Georgia's citizens, and I believe their work in this area will make a significant difference in combating identity theft."

In recent years, the Governor has charged the GBI with combating Internet child predators and Georgia's growing methamphetamine problem, and the Bureau has a proven track record of success. For example, more agents have been assigned to the GBI's High Tech Investigations Unit, and their caseload increased 57 percent in one year. In addition, total drug seizures have increased from \$7.6 million in 2005 to more than \$32 million in recent years.

With Senate Bill 388, the responsibility of investigating complaints of identity fraud will be moved from the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs to the GBI. Along with new funding in the state budget, SB 388 will enable the GBI to add eight investigative positions to the ID Theft Task Force to combat identity theft statewide.

"We look forward to supporting the GBI as they work to protect Georgia's citizens and businesses from the scourge of identity theft," Sen. Chance continued. "I am confident that the GBI will embrace this new mission and produce the kind of results the people of this state deserve."

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Sen. Ronnie Chance represents the 16th Senate District, which includes Lamar and Pike counties and portions of Fayette, Monroe and Spalding counties. He may be reached by phone at 404.651.7738 or via e-mail at ronnie.chance@senate.ga.gov.